

REMARKS:

Claims 32-41 are pending in this application.

Claim 42 has been added to recite the feature of the skin-engaging layer eroding during shaving to reveal the non-skin engaging layer, thereby providing a color signal that the razor cartridge should be replaced. No new matter has been added and new claim 42 is fully supported and justified by the specification.

Claims 32-37, 40, and 41/40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 32-35 and 37-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over, Creasy et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,875,287 (hereinafter "Creasy").

Applicant's Reply to the Rejection
Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 32-37, 40, and 41/40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter

that applicant regards as the invention.

Applicant has amended claims 32 and 40 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. No new subject matter has been added.

Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph of independent claims 32 and 40 and corresponding dependent claims 33-37 and 41/40 be withdrawn.

Applicant's Reply to the Rejection
Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

Claims 32-35 and 37-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over, Creasy. The Examiner's rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant's claimed strip contains a water soluble shaving aid, such as polyethylene oxide, that leaches out of the strip and onto the skin during use. In contrast, Creasy describes a hydrogel strip that becomes slippery when wet, but which does not leach out any polymer or shaving aid. Thus, Creasy distinguishes his strip from those strips that deposit the lubricant on the skin. See col. 2, lines 36-43. In the

Creasy hydrogel strip, the "water-soluble polymers are rendered insoluble to prevent their dissolution and separation from the surface of the skin-engaging portion in the presence of water." Col. 3, lines 3-6; emphasis added. Creasy states that the "current invention applies only to those effective water insoluble forms of these [hydrogel] materials." Col. 8, lines 4-5; emphasis added. The Creasy hydrogel strip is also described in Thoene U.S. Patent No. 5,056,221 (hereinafter "Thoene"; previously cited by applicant), which confirms that such strips do not leach out the lubricious substances during shaving. See col. 2, lines 65-68.

Thus, Creasy and Thoene are directed to a completely different type of strip from that of applicant's claimed invention. The skilled worker would not replace the insoluble hydrogel layer of these references with a water soluble shaving aid because this would completely destroy the nature and purpose of the Creasy and Thoene strips. One clearly would not modify the prior art in such a way as to destroy its mode of operation and the benefits provided therein. See, e.g., In re Gordon, 221 USPQ 1125, 1127 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

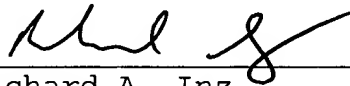
Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that claim 32 is allowable over Creasy. Claims 33-35 and 37 depend

from claim 32 and are therefore allowable over Creasy. Claims 38-41 are allowable over Creasy for at least the reasons claim 32 is allowable over Creasy. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 32-35 and 37-41 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a) be withdrawn.

Conclusion

The foregoing demonstrates that claims 32-42 are allowable. Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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